Memorandum

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Date: September 22, 2016

Agenda Item No. 2(B)6
October 5, 2016

To: Honorable Chairman Jean Monestime
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Carlos A. Gimenez
Mayor

Subject: Development of a Curriculum for Teaching Early Childhood Students Enrolled in the County's Head Start Program About Domestic Violence – Directive 152759

The following report is provided pursuant to Resolution No. R-65-16, adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (Board) on November 19, 2015, which requested the County Mayor or Mayor's designee to prepare a status report regarding the development of a curriculum for teaching early childhood students enrolled in the County's Head Start Program about domestic violence. The Board directed the County Mayor or Mayor's designee to work with delegate agencies, the Head Start Policy Council and the Community Action Agency Board to develop a curriculum for teaching early childhood students enrolled in the County's Head Start program about domestic violence, including how to identify domestic violence triggers, control violent impulses, and recognize and report signs of abuse.

The Head Start/Early Head Start Program (HS/EHS) serves over 7,500 children ages 0 to 5 in some of the County's most impoverished communities. Administered by the Community Action and Human Services Department (CAHSD), HS/EHS provides high-quality, comprehensive early childhood education and supportive services to low-income families. National statistics also show that children exposed to domestic violence at home are at risk of post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and poor school performance. Statistics also show that children who see domestic violence at home may grow up to become domestic violence aggressors themselves.

In response to Resolution No. R-65-16, CAHSD has researched best practices for incorporating domestic violence education into the HS/EHS. A list of age appropriate, evidence-based violence prevention programs was provided to CAHSD from the University of Miami and, after careful analysis and evaluation, the department has selected a curriculum that is grounded in trauma-informed education. This approach recognizes the impact of traumatic stress on children, particularly on educational achievement and behavior. Curriculum activities will be designed to effectively respond to the learning and behavioral needs of young children who have experienced traumatic events or toxic stress, including community violence, domestic violence, and/or abuse and/or neglect within the child's familial relations.

CAHSD will also develop a plan for extensive professional development for teachers and teacher's assistants to support the domestic violence curriculum in the HS/EHS classrooms. During the CAHSD HS/EHS Pre-Service training in August 2016, all HS/EHS staff were given mandatory domestic violence awareness and safety net best practices training. CAHSD provided a toolkit to each HS/EHS program to support the domestic violence curriculum, which

included best practices, classroom activities, lesson plans, and age appropriate read-aloud books.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Lucia Davis-Raiford, Director, Community Action and Human Services Department, at (786) 469-4644.

Per Ordinance 14-65, this memorandum will be placed on the next available Board of County Commissioners meeting agenda.

C: Russell Benford, Deputy Mayor, Office of the Mayor
Lucia Davis-Raiford, Director, Community Action and Human Services Department
Eugene Love, Agenda Coordinator